



When Should I Go to the Hospital?

Labor is a natural process that involves several stages preparing your body for delivery. However, women may experience the stages of labor differently so if you have questions or concerns, it's important to call your care team for guidance through the decision-making process including knowing the right time to go to the hospital.

It's Time to Call Your Provider

- If this is your first baby and your contractions are 3-2-1
 - The frequency of your contractions is 3 minutes apart, for about 2 hours and each contraction lasts for 1 minute AND you cannot talk or walk through a contraction.
- If you have had a baby before and your contractions are 4-1-1 or 5-1-1.
 - The frequency of contraction is 4 or 5 minutes apart consistently or increasing for an hour, and each contraction is lasting for 1 minute AND you cannot talk or walk during contractions.
- If your water breaks
- If you have bleeding that is more than spotting (like a period)
- If you feel DECREASED FETAL MOVEMENT
- If you have any concerns

**IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS,
PLEASE CALL YOUR PROVIDER IMMEDIATELY.**



What to Expect During Early Labor

The first stage of labor has two parts, early labor and active labor. It is important to remember the pace, and duration of the stages can be different for each pregnancy. Your team is available to answer questions about what is happening and will help you decide when it's time to go to the hospital.

During early labor, you will start to feel mild contractions happening every 5–15 minutes. Over time, contractions will start to become more consistent, more frequent and they will last longer. The frequency of contractions determined by counting the minutes from the start of a contraction to the start of the next contraction. The duration of the contraction is how long the contraction lasts. When you can feel the tightening start until when you no longer feel a tightening, or pressure sensation. In many cases, it's safe to manage early labor at home, or outside the hospital. Generally early labor will last between 6–12 hours, but it is also normal for early labor to last 24 hours or longer.

Tips for Early Labor

- **Rest.** Know your body is working, so rest when you can.
- **Hydrate.** Drink plenty of fluids, and eat small frequent snacks.
- **Breathe.** Find your comfort zone.
 - Focus on breathing, and be aware of your breathing. Take intentional deep breaths in when your contraction starts and exhale to help your muscles relax.
 - Use rhythmical and/ or patterned breathing. Remember to be intentional with how you are breathing.
- **Move.** Whether you are at home or in the hospital, moving around and changing your position often can help manage pain or discomfort throughout labor. Labor movements include:
 - Rocking on a chair or ball
 - Pelvic tilts cow/cat position
 - Kneeling or resting on ball
 - Slow Dancing
 - Swaying and rocking
- **Relax.** Take a warm shower to help you relax and take steps to make your environment comfortable including music, lighting, people and relaxing smells.
- **Visualize.** Use visualization to help you find a focus or focal point.
- **Ask for support.** Your support person can help you by:
 - Encouraging you to stay hydrated with ice chips, fluids and offering snacks.
 - Applying counter pressure to your lower back.
 - Offering massage for your shoulders, arms, and hips.
 - Reminding you to relax, breathe and breathing together.
 - Getting your bath or shower ready.
 - Playing music, dimming lights or lighting battery operated candles if you are in the hospital.
 - Applying heat or ice packs to your lower back. Offering support as you move into various positions during labor.

Keep Track of Changes During Labor

It's important to communicate any changes to your provider right away so they can help you determine when it's time to go to the hospital. Take notes on the chart below so you have the details to share with your provider.

	Time of Occurrence	Details
Contractions Started		
Water Broke		
Bleeding		